

Remarks

General:

Claims 25-48 are pending in the application. Claims 25-48 stand rejected. Claims 34 and 46 are canceled. Claims 25, 27, 28, and 38 are amended as discussed below. Claims 26, 29, 32, 35, and 37 are amended solely to update the step numbering for consistency with claim 25. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

Procedural posture:

This response is accompanied by a Request for Continued Examination, and the amendments to the claims are therefore proper without prejudice to whether any new issues are raised.

Claim objections:

Claim 25 has been amended as requested by the examiner to clarify that the analysis in step v, previously step iv, is done by computer simulation.

The examiner points out that claim 30 recites a step xv, previously step xiv, but is not dependent from any claim reciting a step xiv, previously step xiii. This is correct. This system of numbering is commonly used, because it is unambiguous. The alternative of using xiv for unrelated steps in claims 29 and 30 could be confusing. It is therefore respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

The examiner requested that claim 32 of the previous amendment filed May 25, 2007 be correctly labeled as "Currently amended." A replacement set of the claims filed May 25, 2007 with the requested correction is filed herewith.

35 U.S.C. § 112 rejections:

Claim 25 was rejected as unclear on the ground that the "measured dimensions" in steps vi and vii, previously steps v and vi, could be incompatible with the "data relating to the initial dimensions" in steps i and ii. Step vii has been amended to recite explicitly that data *relating* to the dimensions measured in step vi and *corresponding* to the data used in step ii are used, and claim 25 is believed now to be self-consistent.

Claim 28 was rejected as incomplete. Claim 28 has been completed.

Claim 46 was rejected as unclear. Claim 46 is canceled, and the rejection is therefore moot.

35 U.S.C § 103:

Claims 25-33, 38-40, and 42-48 were rejected as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,480,480 (Scott) in view of EP 0 358 994 (Palusamy). Independent claims 25 and 38 are amended to include the features of previous claim 34, which was not rejected on prior art grounds. Claim 47 incorporates by reference all the features of claim 25. Claims 25 and 38, as now amended, and claim 47 are therefore believed to be allowable over the prior art. Claims 26-33 and 35-37 are dependent from claim 25, claims 39-45 are dependent from claim 38, and claim 48 is dependent from claim 47. Without prejudice to their individual merits, those dependent claims are believed to be allowable over the prior art for at least the same reasons as claims 25 and 38.

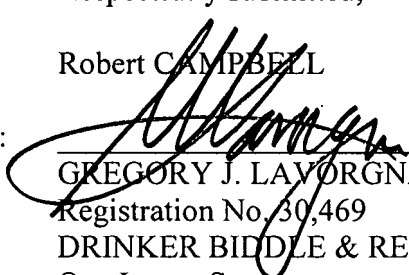
Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing, all of claims 25-33, 35-45, and 47-48 are believed to be allowable. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the examiner's objections and rejections, and allowance of claims 25-33, 35-45, and 47-48. An early notice of allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner believes, however, that direct communication would advance prosecution, the Examiner is invited to telephone Henry Blanco White, telephone no. 215-988-3301.

Respectfully submitted,

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